

ART. XV.—*The Story of Yūsuf Shah Sarrāj (the Saddler), and of how the inhabitants of Kazwīn<sup>1</sup> outwitted the heavenly bodies.* A Satire. Translated by Colonel Sir EDWARD C. ROSS, C.S.I., M.R.A.S.

Mīrzā Fath ‘Alī, Akhwand-Zādeh, an officer of Tartar origin in the Russian Service at Tiflis, wrote a series of comedies in the Azeri-Türkī dialect, and this satirical tale, about the year 1858. These compositions were translated into Persian by Mīrzā Ja‘afar of Karājah Dāgh, and these translations were lithographed and published at Tehrān in 1874. The volume contains six Plays—

The Wazīr of the Khān of Lankurān, in four acts.

The Thief-taking Bear, in three acts.

The Miser, in three acts.

The Court-Pleaders, in three acts.

Monsieur Jourdan, the Botanist, and } in four acts.  
Must‘ali Shah, the reputed Sorcerer }

Mūllā Ibrāhīm Khalīl, the Alchemist, in four acts.

And the Story of Yūsuf Shah, which comes between the fourth and fifth Plays, and is written partly in narrative, partly in drama form.

The first of the Plays was edited with a translation, notes, and vocabulary by Messrs. W. Haggard and Guy le Strange in 1882, and a most useful little book it has been to students of Persian.

A translation of “The Alchemist,” by Mr. Guy le Strange, appeared in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of January, 1886. “The Bear,” “The Pleaders,”

<sup>1</sup> Kazwīn—Capital of Irāk-‘Ajemi, founded by Shapūr.

and "Sorcerer" have been published in the Persian, with English translations, by Mr. Rogers, and I learn from Sir Frederic Goldsmid that a translation of "The Miser" was published in Madras. Two of the comedies, "The Wazīr" and "Pleaders," have been translated into French by M. Alphonse Cillière, Paris, 1888. Three of the Plays have also been edited in the Persian from the Tehran edition, with glossary and notes, by MM. Barbier de Meynard and S. Guyard, Paris, 1886.

The story of Yūsuf Shah has not, as far as I know, been hitherto translated into English or French. It is rather a curiosity in its way, and by no means devoid of pungent humour.

E. C. R.

#### THE STORY OF YŪSUF SHAH, THE SADDLER.

The remarkable incidents here narrated happened in the early years of the rule of the Safawīs, when, on account of the occurrence of certain events, Mohammed Shah Safawī had abdicated in favour of his son, Shah 'Abbās the First.

The scene is laid in Kazwīn, in the seventh year of the reign of Shah 'Abbās (A.D. 1592, or *circa*). It is the beginning of spring, three days after the Nowrōz,<sup>1</sup> and about three o'clock in the afternoon. Shah 'Abbās the First is sitting in the palace, enjoying the society of his beloved Selmā Khawātūn.

Āghā Mubārik, the chief eunuch, raising the curtain, and bowing respectfully, announces: "Mīrzā<sup>2</sup> Sadr-ed-dīn, the Munejjim<sup>3</sup> Bāshī, solicits the honour of paying his respects to your Majesty on an urgent affair."

The Shah, signing to Selmā Khawātūn to retire to the ladies' apartments, says to the Chief Eunuch, "Tell him to come in."

<sup>1</sup> Nowrōz — Vernal equinox. Persian national fête of the new year, of Zoroastrian origin.

<sup>2</sup> Mīrzā—From Amīr Zādeh. Prefixed to names it is a simple title of respect equivalent to Mr.; after a name it signifies a royal prince; alone "secretary."

<sup>3</sup> Munejjim Bāshī—Chief astrologer rather than astronomer is meant here.

The Munejjim Bāshī, having entered the Shah's presence, and bowed respectfully—

*The Shah*: "What is it, Mīrzā?"

*The Munejjim Bāshī*: "May Heaven guard your Majesty! It appears from the courses of the stars that, fifteen days after Nowrōz, Mars will be in conjunction with Scorpio, and the first result of this malign conjunction will be that in an Eastern land—probably Irān—a great catastrophe will befall the reigning monarch. I have therefore considered it my duty, as the devoted well-wisher of this sublime Court, to give your Majesty timely warning of this aspect of affairs."

Now at that time the Shah was not, at most, more than twenty-two years old, and it is well known how sweet, how dear, and how precious life is at that youthful age, more especially in the case of one enjoying the exalted position of a Sovereign. The communication of the Chief Astrologer caused the youthful Shah extreme terror, so that he suddenly turned pale, and demeaned himself like one distraught; but after a few minutes he raised his head and said to Mīrzā Sadr-ed-dīn, "Very well, you can go."

The Chief Astrologer bowed and retired, and the Shah remained alone in deep thought for half an hour, after which he turned to Āghā Mubārik and said, "Send a ferrāsh<sup>1</sup> to summon to my presence Mīrzā Mohsin the Wazīr, the Sirdār Mīrzā Zemān Khān, Mīrzā Yahyā the Mustowfī,<sup>2</sup> and Akhwand<sup>3</sup> Samad the Chief Mūllā.<sup>4</sup>

The eunuch goes out and despatches a ferrāsh, who brings the persons designated, who, after receiving permission to enter, make their bows and await orders.

*The Shah*: "I have summoned you to hold a consultation regarding the means of averting a catastrophe, so that,

<sup>1</sup> Ferrāsh—Lit. "spreader," post-classical intensive noun from the Arabic root *farasha*. One who spreads carpets, beds, mattresses, etc., and keeps them in order. In Persian establishments the ferrāshes are messengers, ushers, and domestic police to inflict punishments.

<sup>2</sup> Mustowfī—Minister of Finance or Chief Paymaster and Auditor of Accounts.

<sup>3</sup> Akhwand—Dominie.

<sup>4</sup> Mūllā Bāshī—Ar. Mowlā. The Mūllās are the religious teachers and priests. It is a title often prefixed to names of learned men.



after due consideration of the matter, you may devise an expedient, and suggest an advisable course. This being a special council, you have my august permission to be seated, and proceed to deliberate on this affair."

These personages having obeyed the Shah's commands, his Majesty proceeds to inform them of the intelligence communicated by the Chief Astrologer, and asks their advice as to the best means of guarding his own person against this catastrophe. All are struck with astonishment. Then, after a moment's silence, the Wazīr Mīrzā Mohsin delivers his opinion in the following terms:—

*Wazīr Mīrzā Mohsin*: "The loyalty and devotion of this humble servant towards the illustrious Government are unquestionable. Your Majesty will, no doubt, recollect to what degree the treasury became depleted in the time of your august father, owing to the incompetence and neglect of my predecessors in the Wazāret. From the day that this important function was entrusted to the vigilance of your servant, I organized measures for keeping the treasury replenished, in accordance with which every State official, on appointment to the government of a province, pays a sum of money proportionate to his means to the treasury by way of Pishkash.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, whenever your Majesty honours a noble by visiting his house, the master of that house has to add presents of costly stuffs to his money offerings. By such expedients, now that it is the seventh year of your Majesty's reign, the public treasury is, thank God! well filled with money. As regards the administration of the business of the Ministry, therefore, your humble servant cannot be accused of any shortcoming; but in face of the prevailing influences of the stars I am powerless and bewildered."

*Sirdār Zemān Khān* next delivers himself as follows: "Although [it is known to you all] this servant has whitened his beard through devotion and assiduity in the service of the illustrious Government, still I may cite an

<sup>1</sup> Pishkash—Present.

instance: Ten years ago, when the Turkish forces, numbering nearly 70,000 men, under the leadership of Bakr Pāshā and Marchī Oghli, were preparing to invade the soil of Irān, your Majesty's illustrious father entrusted the command of the Persian forces to me. Although our troops were not less numerous than those of the Turks, I was nevertheless loth to expose the forces of the 'elect people' to the risk of destruction in encountering the hosts of perdition. I accordingly issued orders that, from the Turkish frontier to the further extremity of Azerbāijān, all the crops of the peasantry should be cut, their cattle driven in, and all the roads and bridges along the route destroyed. So when Bakr Pāshā crossed our frontier, whilst not seeing a single man of our army before him, yet he found the roads so destroyed and deserted that he was quite unable to move forward his artillery, which he was obliged to leave at the frontier. Pushing on with his cavalry and infantry, it was only after experiencing all sorts of difficulties and hardships that he succeeded in reaching Tabriz,<sup>1</sup> and no matter in what direction he sent his cavalry in search of provisions, not a grain of wheat or barley, not a single cow, nor a sheep were they able to bring in. So after three days, during which his troops, famished and dejected, were reduced to great straits, he saw no escape from his dilemma but to beat the drum of retreat and fly from Tabriz. By this strategy the kingdom of Irān was saved from the invasion of the foreign hordes. The destruction of the roads and bridges had proved so advantageous that even after the flight of Bakr Pāshā the Persian Government considered it inadvisable to reconstruct them, or to re-establish the prosperity of the places I had caused to be laid waste, in order that foreign armies should be unable to invade the soil of Irān; and even up to the present time they remain in the same condition. By these means, whilst not a drop of blood of a single soldier of the sublime Government was shed, the whole of the victorious

<sup>1</sup> Tabriz—Persians perhaps fancifully derive the name from *tab-* and *rīz*, febrifugal.



army was preserved safe against the fierce violence of our hostile neighbour. In affairs of this sort, then, the old mastiff of the glorious threshold is by no means without resource, but as regards resistance against the stars, his limited wisdom is unavailing to devise a remedy."

The Shah's terror increases.

*Mirzā Yahyā, the Mustawfī*, speaks: "Forasmuch as this unworthy servant was brought up by the Wazīr, is of the number of his relatives, and has through the blessing of his existence attained his present rank, I accordingly altogether follow his excellent example and laudable principles in evincing loyalty and devotion, and make the following representation before the ground under your Majesty's auspicious feet. The pay of the forces and of the inferior officers is, by your Majesty's command and by my instrumentality, paid from the revenues of the provinces. When a deficit, as stated by the Wazīr, occurred in the public treasury, I also was grieved on that account. So, whilst in order that the illustrious Government should not be discredited by stoppage of the salaries of Government servants, the orders for payment of the salaries were duly signed and issued to the various provinces, I sent at the same time secret written orders to the governors of provinces to withhold payment of the salaries, unless receiving my separate orders in writing. By this device the public treasury has been replenished, and there is a vast difference in that respect; and although the officers and men of the army have been kept in arrears of their pay, still, thank God! from the prevalence of peace and tranquillity and exceedingly low prices in Irān, they have not much felt the want of their pay. The skill and resource which your servant is endowed with are ample to enable him to discharge duties of this sort with honour and credit; but to avert the penetrating influences of the heavenly bodies, his intellect is of no avail."

It being now the *Mūllā Bāshī's* turn, he speaks as follows: "May the blessed Lord, for the honour of the nine Imāms, protect the person of his sacred Majesty from all

earthly and celestial misfortunes ! The loyalty and fidelity of this suppliant for the perpetuity of the victorious Government, under the noble Safawī dynasty, transcend description. When I attained to the rank of Mūllā Bāshī, in the time of your Majesty's august father, half the people of Persia, nay even half the inhabitants of the capital, were Sunnī. By judicious exhortation in the first place, and secondly by stern commination, I have led the whole of the Sunnīs into the right path of the religion of the twelve Imāms, so that now, through the grace of God and my sanctity, there are not more than five or six Sunnīs to be found in all Persia. I am highly pleased, too, with the people of Persia in this respect, insomuch as at my mere requisition they forsook the ancient faith of their forefathers and submitted themselves to my guidance. So much so, that I was desirous of trying my hand on the Jews and Armenians, in view to turning them also to the Shī'ah faith, but some well-meaning persons thought it best not to undertake this, and as after all there are Jews and Armenians in every country, it matters not if a few remain in ours also. Further, in this land of Islām, in accordance with the perspicuous traditions, the possessor of the throne and crown is not considered entitled to that ultimate degree of obedience and reverence which, according to the learned Mūjtehids,<sup>1</sup> is due only to the Imām, and the representatives of the Imām. I, however, wrote to the preachers in all the provinces, directing them to ascend the pulpits of the various mosques and proclaim therefrom that those traditions do not apply to the Safawī dynasty, for it descends from the family of the Prophet and of the Imāms, and it is plain that the Imāms (the peace of God be on them !) uttered those traditionary sayings concerning others, and not in reference to their own descendants. But now that his Majesty is in peril from the influences of the stars, my heart, from sorrow, is like a fish grilling in a

<sup>1</sup> Mūjtehid—Doctor of Divinity and Law. Formerly a degree conferred by the colleges. Judge of a religious court.

frying-pan, and it appears to my limited comprehension that the accursed Chief Astrologer himself, who understands better than we do how to deal with this matter, has acted treasonably towards his Majesty in revealing the danger impending from the stars without disclosing the means of averting it. The question certainly suggests itself to one's mind—when he has shown the poison, why should he conceal the antidote and withdraw himself?

“The Prophet, on whom be God's blessings, said: ‘All astrologers are liars.’ I take this saying to refer to their dispositions rather than to their knowledge, for the predictions of the wretches have frequently been fulfilled, but they themselves are unprincipled liars. Let his Majesty summon him and demand the specific by means of which this impending catastrophe may be averted, and if he excuses himself let his head be struck off.”

It is evident that the Mūllā Bāshī had an old standing grudge against the Munejjim Bāshī, and seeing in the situation a fine opportunity for accomplishing his purpose, wished to burn his enemy's father and the whole tribe of astrologers. In sooth, however, let us not be unjust. The Munejjim Bāshī must, on his side, have acted very foolishly, for why should he have imparted such alarming intelligence to the Shah, and so cause all this discussion, and bring destruction on himself? It seems that the Munejjim Bāshī, when afterwards questioned on this point, replied: “I was afraid that if I were not the first to communicate this information to the Shah it would be imparted by other astrologers, and the Shah would have thought me an ignoramus, and I would have been dismissed from my post.”

Seemingly the Shah had become unfavourably disposed towards the Munejjim Bāshī on account of that news of ill omen, and, the incitation of the Mūllā Bāshī fanning the flame, his Majesty, falling into a towering passion, called out angrily to the Chief Eunuch: “Send a ferrāsh at once to bring the Munejjim Bāshī.”

The Munejjim Bāshī is brought in.



*The Shah*, seated knees akimbo, and regarding the Munejjim Bāshī like an angry lion: "Son of a burnt father! So you threaten me with calamity from the stars, and conceal the remedy! Executioner!" (In the twinkling of an eye the dread executioner appears, dagger in belt, cord in hand. The soul of the hapless Munejjim Bāshī bounds, and he trembles like a leaf.) "Strike the head off this vile cur."

Sirdār Zemān Khān, though of the fraternity of the sword, was, nevertheless, a very kind-hearted man. Pitying the condition of the Munejjim Bāshī, he stands up and says: "May I perish for you! After they have struck this cur's head off, of whom shall we inquire about the means of warding off the threatened calamity? By the honour due to my grey beard, I, your humble servant, would urge that his life be spared, and that he be questioned as to the remedial measures by which the catastrophe may be averted. If he fails to reply as required, then is he guilty and deserving of death. It is for your Majesty to decide in the matter."

*The Shah*, to the executioner: "Very well. Suspend the execution; leave him there, and retire." Then to the Munejjim Bāshī: "Accursed wretch! instantly devise means of averting this calamity."

The unfortunate Munejjim Bāshī, in evil plight, knew no remedy against the occurrence, but in fear of death and mortal terror, he dared not avow this, and said: "May I be your ransom! The remedy is possible. Grant me an hour's respite that I may go and consult the Tables of Alagh Beg, and return to communicate the result."

Now nothing was ever recorded in the Tables of Alagh Beg about averting accidents of this sort, but the Munejjim Bāshī wished, by this pretext, to gain time to have recourse to his preceptor, our lord and master, Jemāl-ed-dīn, and consult him, knowing him to be more learned and experienced than himself in the science of the heavenly bodies.

The Shah accorded permission, but before the Munejjim Bāshī got out Āghā Mubārīk entered and announced: "Our

master Jemāl-ed-dīn <sup>1</sup> craves the honour of audience of your Majesty."

*The Shah* : "Call him in." Then to the Munejjim Bāshī : "Remain a while where you are."

Our master Jemāl-ed-dīn, having entered the apartment and duly paid his respects, sat down at a sign from the Shah, and spoke as follows : "May your Majesty be preserved from all danger ! Although your servant has latterly been prevented by old age from attending at Court, and forced to elect retirement, still, as at the present season, that is to say during the fifteen days succeeding Nowrōz, there seems, from the conjunction of Mars and Scorpio, to be probability of a great catastrophe befalling your Majesty's person, I have, therefore, considered it my duty, lest the younger astrologers should be ignorant of, or unable to deal with, this crisis, to wait on your Majesty, in order to inform you and point out the measures necessary for averting the danger."

*The Shah*, radiant with delight : "My lord, we have just been discussing this very matter ; we are apprized of the impending occurrence : tell us, then, how to ward off the danger."

*Our master Jemāl-ed-dīn* : "During these days of ill omen, that is to say, until fifteen days shall have elapsed after the festival, your Majesty must relinquish the throne and sceptre, and make them over to a criminal deserving of death, you yourself disappearing from the sight of the people. In those circumstances that criminal being *pro tempore* actual monarch of Irān, the evil effects of the stellar influences will fall on his head ; after which, when the event has happened, and that criminal temporarily in possession of the throne and sceptre shall have perished therefrom, your Majesty will come forth from concealment, re-ascend the throne, and reign in all prosperity and happiness. But it is essential that not a single person of the people of the land shall be aware of this stratagem,

<sup>1</sup> Mowlāna Jemāl-ed-dīn—A Shī'an divine. Celebrated for learning and piety. *Mowlā-na*, our lord or our master ; syn. with Seyyid.

nor suspect that your Majesty has only temporarily abdicated and lent the throne and sceptre to another; so that the malefactor seated on the throne may imagine himself in verity the monarch. And it is also necessary to divorce the ladies of the Harem, to tear up their marriage contracts, and ask them whether they are willing to renew them, and wedding anew 'Abbās, son of Mohammed, no longer Shah but merely a private individual like others, be satisfied with a life of poverty and resignation. Whosoever consents let her marriage be renewed in the name of 'Abbās, son of Mohammed, and the contract written, and let any who are not willing be at once allowed to depart." So the Munejjim Bāshī found deliverance from death. The lines of care at once disappeared from the Shah's face, and his pallor gave place to ruddiness. A chorus of praise of the consummate wisdom of our master Jemāl-ed-dīn went up from the members of the Council.

*The Shah*, turning a radiant and smiling countenance towards the Mūllā Bāshī, inquired, "Have you in view any evil-doer, deserving of death according to the religious law, to whom I may transfer the crown and throne?"

*The Mūllā Bāshī*: "May the Ruler of the Universe vouchsafe a long term of natural life to your Majesty! In this city of Kazwīn a good-for-nothing fellow has been discovered, than whom no one on the face of the earth is more wicked and deserving of death. He is known by the name of Yūsuf the Saddler (Sarrāj), but where he was brought up is not known, only that at the present time he is residing in the city of Kazwīn, and having gathered round him a number of followers drawn from the lowest dregs of the population, is incessantly attacking and denouncing the illustrious literati<sup>1</sup> and the ministers of the religious law. This accursed wretch is, indeed, constantly telling his disciples in the plainest terms that the honoured literati are in the habit of gulling the common people. As an example of his doctrine, he holds it unnecessary to

<sup>1</sup> Literati—'Ulemā, the learned in religious law.

wage religious wars, and wrong to pay 'fifths' and the Imāms' dues, and asserts that the 'ulemā disapprove of the common people being guided by the opinions of demised Mūjtahids, in order that their own market may be brisk. He, moreover, impugns even the sublime Government, as if all the officials from Kedkhodā<sup>1</sup> to Shah were tyrants and highway robbers, from whom no benefit accrues either to the country or to the Faith; who are ever mulcting and punishing the hapless people merely in the indulgence of their own sensual inclinations, and are never guided in their conduct and acts by law or rule. In short, he attributes to those persons the behaviour of bullies and highwaymen. It is also alleged that he professes belief in the doctrine of transmigration of souls. This suppliant for the endurance of the sublime Government deems it advisable that your Majesty should transfer the crown and throne to this accursed wretch, so that, having met with his deserts through the planetary influences, he may descend to the nethermost hell."

The members of the Council unanimously approved and corroborated this view, and vociferously exclaimed, "Yūsuf Sarrāj, the son of a burnt father, is fully deserving of death, and a meet subject for the celestial wrath."

*The Shah*, pleased and happy: "I consent to his immolation; to-morrow this plan will be acted on and completely carried out." He then dismisses all the members of the conclave, and the Council breaks up.

Possibly the readers of this narrative will regard it as a fable, and, incredulous as to the occurrence of the events, assign them to fiction. In that case, I trust they will peruse the narrative of the events of the seventh year of the reign of Shah 'Abbās, contained in the "Tārīkh-i-'Ālim-Ārā."

It is now necessary to tell you who Yūsuf Sarrāj was. He was the son of Kerbelāi<sup>2</sup> Selīm, a peasant of one of

<sup>1</sup> Kedkhodā—In rural districts, the village headman. In cities, a municipal magistrate. The primary sense is house-lord.

<sup>2</sup> Kerbelāi—One who has visited the holy shrine of Husain, the son of 'Ali, at Kerbelā.

the villages of Kazwīn. This Kerbelāi Selīm, being a religious, God-fearing man, wished his son to become a Mūllā, and join the fraternity of the 'ulemā. He accordingly brought him, in the days of his youth, to the town of Kazwīn, and put him to school, where he remained some years, until he grew up and became conscious of a matured intellect. With a view to acquiring knowledge, he then went to Ispahān, and thence, after some years, to holy Kerbelā, where, in the assemblies of the honoured 'ulemā, he set about completing his knowledge, and during a prolonged residence in that holy place he became well versed in all the learning of Islām. As he saw through the charlatanism of the Mūllās in many matters, he conceived a repugnance to the class, and had no desire to enrol himself in that crew. Returning from Kerbelā he went to Hamadān, and there, being then forty years of age, he occupied himself for one year in learning the trade of saddler, under a master of the craft named Khālīd, after which he returned to Kazwīn, because, from being the capital, this handicraft seemed to be more in demand there. On arrival at Kazwīn he chose a wife and opened a shop. Being himself a man of gentle disposition and blameless life, his mind was constantly troubled by the unseemly conduct of the Mūllās and officials, and he was unable to restrain his tongue from reproaching and denouncing them. Although his concern about such matters won him sincere friends and well-wishers, yet in the end it was the cause of his undoing.

The next day, in accordance with the Shah's command, all the nobles, the officers of State, the 'ulemā, the princes and officials, from Kedkhodā to Wazīr, assembled in the Royal Hall of Audience at two hours before noon, and each person having taken his appointed seat, they all awaited the Shah's appearance in perfect silence. Whereupon the Shah appeared, wearing the crown on his head, a jewelled mace in his hand, diamond armlets on his arms, and sword and dagger set with precious stones girt to his waist, and, entering the Durbār room, which, raised a cubit's height

above the level of the ground, is open in front and without screen or anything to intercept the view of the people, ascended the throne and took his seat. Then, turning his face towards the assemblage, his Majesty addressed them as follows: "O people! It is now the seventh year that by the will of Almighty God I have been your king, and have to the best of my ability shown kindness and favour to each and all of you. I, too, am very well satisfied and pleased with you, as, from the affection you bear to the Safawī family, you have manifested loyalty and fidelity towards me. To-day, for certain reasons which I consider it unnecessary to impart to you, I am obliged to relinquish the sovereignty, and make over the throne and crown to one who is more fitted and adapted for this position than myself. This person will be indicated to you by Sirdār Zemān Khān, the Wazīr, the Mustowfī, our master Jemāl-ed-dīn, and the Munejjim Bāshī. You must all go and bring him here with the utmost pomp and ceremony, and, having seated him on this throne, regard him as absolutely your king. Woe betide anyone who swerves from obedience to this command of mine, or fails in allegiance to that person!"

The Shah, having concluded his address, removed the crown from his head, and quitted the throne. Then, having taken off his sumptuous robes and donned old, worn-out clothing, he turns to the people and says: "Now I am simply a common individual, a poor man, by name 'Abbās, son of Mohammed. Seek me no more, for you will not find me. Farewell, I am off." Exit.

The assembled people were amazed, and were at a loss to account for this state of affairs.

The Shah proceeded thence to the Harem, and by his orders all the ladies assembled in one room and there awaited his Majesty, who appeared before them in those same old garments. The ladies of the Harem, seeing him in this garb, felt inclined to burst into peals of laughter, but the Shah's stern looks and bearing restrained them from doing so, and checked their merriment. Thereupon

the Shah commands the Head Eunuch: "Bring Mūllā Resūl and two of his associates." The Mūllās, who were already in attendance outside, entered the presence, and the Shah signed to them to be seated. Then turning to the ladies he says: "My dear couch-fellows, I am extremely sorry to have to announce to you that I am no longer king of Irān, no longer the possessor of wealth and palaces, or able to maintain you elegantly dressed and bedight, in luxurious apartments. I am now one of the rank and file of the people, poor and destitute. Needs must I read your divorces, and set you all at liberty to choose whomsoever you may feel inclined for." Then turning to Mūllā Resūl: "Proceed to carry into effect the formal divorcement of these ladies." Mūllā Resūl reads the form of divorce of them all, in presence of the witnesses he had brought with him. When the fair ladies of the Harem saw what a strange thing had befallen, they were greatly alarmed and agitated, and not knowing how matters stood, failed to understand the case, and were lost in amazement. When the deeds of divorcement had been read, Khwājah Mubārik tore up the marriage contracts by order of the Shah, who, turning again to the ladies of the Harem, said: "If any of you, content to endure poverty with resignation, will accept me, 'Abbās, the son of Mohammed, for husband, I will renew the contract of marriage with her."

Nearly all the ladies agreed to re-espouse the Shah, for he was young and very handsome, and, moreover, the ladies thought it was merely a matter of jest and pleasantry, and did not for a moment believe that Shah 'Abbās could become plain 'Abbās, son of Mohammed. But amongst them were two fair charmers who had entered the Shah's Harem against their will. These two made the following appeal, very bashfully and in a low voice: "We have regarded the high honour of being wedded to the Shah as good fortune, and have derived the utmost pleasure from our high position, but now that we are to be debarred from this enjoyment, it will never suit us to espouse 'Abbās, the son of Mohammed."



Both were instantly dismissed. One of them was a Georgian girl whom the Wālī of Georgia had sent as a present to the Shah. The very next day she set out with her cousin, taking with her all her jewellery and wearing apparel and a large sum of money, and returned to her native land. In Georgia her story was disbelieved; it was thought she had fled, and it was in contemplation to send her back to Persia. I know not what occurred to cause her case to be forgotten, but this girl eventually married a Georgian youth, and passed the remainder of her life in Georgia.

The other heart-ravisher was the daughter of a merchant of Kazwīn. She had been betrothed to a good-looking youth, but the Shah's agents had laid hands on her on account of her beauty and introduced her into the royal Harem. Perceiving, in the position of affairs described, the means of attaining her own desire, she returned to her father's house and was united to her betrothed.

The marriage contracts of all the other ladies having been renewed as between them and plain 'Abbās, son of Mohammed, the Shah directed the Chief Eunuch to take them all forthwith to a house that had been prepared for them at the entrance of the sixth street of Kazwīn, and, leaving them there, to return himself to the royal palace. Thereupon 'Abbās, son of Mohammed, issuing forth from the Harem, went on his way and vanishes out of sight.

The shop of Yūsuf, the saddler, was situated to the east of the Maidān (plain) of the Shah's mosque. At two o'clock in the afternoon Yūsuf, after duly performing the afternoon prayers, was sitting employed in preparing a leading halter which a customer had ordered for delivery that day, wishing to finish it so as not to break his promise. Two of his friends were sitting in front of him, listening to his conversation. He was deploring the dearth prevailing in the town, and affirming that the hapless poor were this year in great straits and distress. For that year was one of drought, and in most of the districts of Kazwīn no rain had fallen, so that cultivation was impossible, and



this had occasioned dearness. Yūsuf's words were: "I am astonished at this Government, which is able, in a thousand ways, to bring water into Kazwīn, but is so steeped in neglect that it does not give the slightest consideration to this work, heedless alike of the condition of the people and the embellishment of its capital."

At this juncture a cloud of dust arose from the west of the Maidān, and Yūsuf Sarrāj, needle in hand, raised his head and perceived that some ceremonial was taking place, but it never occurred to his mind that this procession and parade were on his account. First came twelve pursuivants in their liveries, wearing four-cornered hats; after them twelve standard-bearers carrying the royal banners; then came a band of valets with bundles on their heads, and a body of footmen carrying rods. Behind them came the "Master of the Horse,"<sup>1</sup> with led horses having jewelled saddle-cloths thrown over their backs, headstalls bespangled with gems, breast-plates studded with pearls, and emerald ornaments hung round their necks. Next came the Mūllā Bāshī, Sirdār Zemān Khān, the Wazīr, the Mustowfī, our master Jemāl-ed-dīn, the Munejjim Bāshī with the honourable 'Ulemā, the great lords and dignitaries, the nobles, the high officials, followed by a body of infantry. A detachment of cavalry in full array brought up the rear at leisurely pace.

As soon as they arrived opposite Yūsuf Sarrāj's shop all came to a halt, and the Mūllā Bāshī and the Sirdār came forward and bowed to Yūsuf, who stood up and made obeisance in great astonishment. The Mūllā Bāshī then addressed him, saying: "Master Yūsuf, by the gracious decree of fate, you are to-day King of Irān. Shah 'Abbās has now vacated the royal throne. Vouchsafe to confer on us honour and good fortune by coming to the Royal Hall of Audience, that your auspicious enthronement may there be accomplished."

But Yūsuf Sarrāj, ignorant as he was of the circumstances, was utterly astounded, and although he saw all the

<sup>1</sup> Mīr Akhwar—Superintendent of the royal stables.

"Pillars of the State" before his eyes for certain, and knew the Mūllā Bāshī who had spoken these words to be reckoned one of the solid men of Persia, still the affair was so extraordinary and inexplicable that he was nowise able to realize it. Obligated to return an answer, he at length spoke as follows: "My lord Mūllā Bāshī! I esteem you one of the solid men of Irān, and I know not whether (God forbid!) you have become insane or partaken of 'bang'<sup>1</sup> that you address words of this sort to me. I am a poor saddler body. What have I to do with throne or crown? I know not, by Allah! to what to attribute your proceedings. I am amazed and dumbfounded, and humbly beg you will leave your servant in peace."

*Sirdār Zemān Khān* then replied: "To-day you have become the cynosure of the world; we, too, are your slaves and as the dogs of your threshold, and submissive and suppliant expressions to the like of us are no longer befitting. For you lordly command is more suitable, and the issue of orders. We are neither mad nor intoxicated, but all of us in our sound and perfect senses; but the decrees of the Lord are not to be changed. This day all the empire of Irān and the sovereignty thereof are entrusted to you. In accordance with the words of the Munejjim Bāshī, vouchsafe to come to the royal palace that your auspicious enthronement may take place." Then, turning to the valets: "Bring the regal robes, and attire the cynosure of the universe in them."

The valets come forward bearing a bundle containing a regal dress, enter the shop, and place the bundle on the ground. They then proceed to divest Yūsuf Sarrāj of his old garments and attire him in royal robes. As opposition was unavailing, Yūsuf Sarrāj resigned himself whilst these sapient people carried out their wishes. When they had finished dressing him the Mīr Akhwar led up a horse with jewelled trappings, on which they mounted Yūsuf Sarrāj,

<sup>1</sup> Bang—An intoxicating decoction from powdered hemp leaves. Also called hashīsh, whence "hashīshīn," an epithet applied to the followers of the old man of the mountain, which some consider the origin of our word assassin.

and they all set out for the royal palace with the same ceremony and in the same order as before. As they marched along, the sound of the joyful acclamations raised in the streets by the attendants made the welkin ring. The whole population of Kazwīn, male and female, great and small, came to the windows and thronged the roof-tops to gaze, all from ignorance of the state of the case, being in wonderment. At the gate of the royal palace the ferrāshes dismounted Yūsuf Sarrāj, and the Mūllā Bāshī and Sirdār Zemān Khān, taking hold of his arms, conducted him with the utmost respect into an apartment of the palace, and seated him on the royal throne. The "Pillars of the State," the 'ulemā, the lords, nobles, and high officials, forming in ranks in front of the throne-room, stood with their hands on their breasts. The Mūllā Bāshī, having recited a prayer, placed the regal crown on the head of Yūsuf Sarrāj, then girt his waist with jewelled belt and scimitar, bound on his arms armlets of precious stones, and placed in his hands a mace studded with diamonds. Then, having recited another prayer, he turned his face to the people and said, "give voice to your felicitations"; whereupon a shout of congratulation went up to the heavens. The palace walls re-echoed the sound of the acclamations, and trumpets and kettle-drums sounded joyously. At the same moment a royal salute, fired from the palace, made the heavens ring, and at this signal a salute of one hundred and ten rounds was fired from the guns of the fort outside the city. Although, since the times of Sa'adi and Hāfiz, the poetic art had greatly declined in Persia, and the verses of the poets were mostly meaningless, mere verbosity and trash,<sup>1</sup> still, in that same year, some accomplished poets, gifted with the art of improvisation, were found to celebrate in fine sonnets the auspicious accession of Yūsuf Sarrāj, comparing him with Solomon for wisdom, with Hātim [Tāi] for generosity, with Rūstam for courage. After glorifying his power and

<sup>1</sup> Pūch.

likening it to Destiny and Fate, they passed out of sight. The wits of Kazwīn found the date of his accession in the following words: "Yūsuf was not Shah of fair ladies [or of the good], but became Shah of the kingdom of Irān."

When these proceedings had terminated the Mūllā Bāshī intimated to the people that they could depart, and all went out of the royal levée hall, leaving only Yūsuf Shah seated on the throne, Āghā Mubārik with a few other eunuchs, 'Azīm Beg, chief valet, with some valets before him, and some ferrāshes outside the room. Yūsuf Shah was lost in amazement, and after a short reverie turned his face to Āghā Mubārik and inquired who he was. Āghā Mubārik replied: "We are the faithful eunuch servants. I am the chief of them, and these are my subordinates who obey my commands." Then turning to the valets, he asked: "Who are ye?" 'Azīm Beg, the head valet, replied: "Your humble servants, the 'Pish-khidmets.'<sup>1</sup> I am the chief of them, and these are my subordinates." Yūsuf Shah next inquired: "Then who are those standing outside?" 'Azīm Beg replied: "Those are the ferrāshes, who are always ready at your beck and call." Yūsuf Shah said: "Go outside, all of you; Āghā Mubārik, let all your subordinates go out, and remain yourself." All disappeared. Yūsuf Shah, summoning Āghā Mubārik to approach, said to him: "I perceive from your countenance that you must be a good man. I adjure you by God to tell me what is the origin of this adventure. As you have always been an inmate of Shah 'Abbās' anderūn<sup>2</sup> it is impossible that you can be ignorant of this matter." Now Āghā Mubārik, obliged to be constantly at the door of Shah 'Abbās' apartment ready to carry out his behests, was fully acquainted with the events of the preceding day, and knew all about the consultations which had taken place. He was, in truth, a very ingenuous, truthful man, and considering that it would be wrong to conceal the truth

<sup>1</sup> Pish-khidmet—Body-servant, valet de chambre, and table-servant.

<sup>2</sup> Anderūn—Inner apartments, penetralia and seraglio.

from the sovereign, he related the whole of the circumstances, from beginning to end, to Yūsuf Shah. The latter further inquired: "Then where is Shah 'Abbās?" The reply was: "He has disappeared, disguised in the attire of a mendicant, and his whereabouts is unknown."

Yūsuf Shah was a man of sense, who had never felt any fears or doubts on account of the stars, but this mysterious elevation filled his heart with terror and apprehension. But notwithstanding all such feelings, he saw no possibility of escape by declining the sovereignty, so, perforce, he applied himself to the discharge of the affairs of the State, and to the exercise of the royal functions. To begin with, he sent for Asad Beg the Ferrāsh Bāshī, and gave him the following orders: "You will at once take with you twelve ferrāshes and go and arrest Akhwand Samad the Mūllā Bāshī, Sirdār Zemān Khān, Mīrzā Hasan the Wazīr, Mīrzā Yahyā the Mustowfī, Mīrzā Sadr-ed-dīn the Munejjim Bāshī, and our Master Jemāl-ed-dīn; you will take them and lodge them in the prison of the citadel, and return and report to me the execution of these orders."

Asad Beg bows and sets out.

He next summoned 'Azīm Beg, the head valet, and says: "See that they prepare the evening meal for me, for I have eaten nothing to-day." The Chief Valet represents: "I have already given directions, and the cooks are engaged in preparing the repast." The Shah said: "Then do you and the Chief Eunuch come and show me the various rooms and ladies' apartments, one by one, and point out which is my own retiring room."

The Head Valet and Chief Eunuch preceded the Shah, and showed each chamber of the "anderūn." The floor of the first room was covered with carpets of various patterns, and the walls and ceiling embellished with paintings of flowers and plants and rare birds. The second room also was carpeted in like manner, and on its walls were painted portraits of former kings and princes of the Safawī dynasty. On the walls of the third room were depicted the likenesses of the Persian line of monarchs. On the walls of the

fourth room they had painted pictures of the ancient warriors of Irān, and the Dīvs of Mazanderān of whom Firdausi wrote; these were depicted with horns and tails, and engaged in combat. The walls of the fifth room bore illustrations of the wars between Shah Ismā'il and his rivals. On the walls of the seraglio apartments they had painted pictures of youths politely offering flowers to maidens, and maidens handing goblets to youths. Every chamber was provided with sleeping gear.

Yūsuf Shah, having chosen one of the rooms of the seraglio for his own chamber of repose, asked the Chief Eunuch: "Which is the ladies' ornament-room?" The Chief Eunuch replied: "That is an upper room, but the door is locked, and the key is with Āghā Hasan, the box-keeper." At the Shah's command a valet at once summoned the Box-keeper, and they opened the finery strong-room and showed it to the Shah. It was a large room with boxes ranged on every side. Opening the lids of these, they showed the Shah some wonderful and rare jewellery and rich ornaments; amongst them were Kashmīr shawls of great value, beautiful ladies' dresses, rich silken robes, ear-rings and finger-rings of diamonds, and necklaces of pearls.

Yūsuf Shah had three daughters, the eldest fourteen, the middle one twelve, and the youngest eight years old; he had also two sons, six and four years of age. He selected for each of his daughters a brooch, two ear-rings, a ring, a necklace, a dress, and a shawl head-dress; for his wife he chose a shawl head-dress and a dress. Giving these to the Head Eunuch he said to him: "Take these to my old house, in the second street of Kazwīn, and deliver them to my wife, and tell her not to be at all uneasy about me, and to send my sons to me here to-morrow." Āghā Mubārik gave the articles to two ferrāshes, who went off with them. The sun set. The Shah having, at the instance of the Chief Valet, returned to the first room, found golden candlesticks lighted up, and a princely repast spread out. Having first performed ablution, and said the evening and bed-time prayers, he sat down to table, and the servants presented

various kinds of dishes. The Shah ate his fill, and they cleared the table. Then they brought ewer and basin, and the Shah washed his hands. They brought coffee, which he drank, and a "Kaliyān,"<sup>1</sup> which he smoked. Thereupon the Ferrāsh Bāshī entered and reported having carried out his orders. The Shah said: "Very well, you can go." After that Āghā Mubārīk returned to report the delivery of the things, and said: "The wife and daughters of the Shah were highly delighted with the presents sent them. They had no anxiety about you; on the contrary, they were so very pleased and joyful at this unlooked-for event that they jumped and danced in their exceeding delight." So the Shah's mind was at ease regarding his wife and children. He continued to question the Chief Eunuch and Head Valet regarding the particulars of the surroundings, until it was the hour of four,<sup>2</sup> when he arose and proceeded to the sleeping apartment, and they laid out his sleeping attire. He ordered the Head Valet to enjoin the officers of the guard to post sentinels everywhere, according to the previous practice. Then he donned his night attire and went to sleep, and the Chief Eunuch and Valet went to their own apartments.

The following morning Yūsuf Shah repaired to the levée room and sent for Mūllā Ramazān, Kūrbān Beg, Mīrzā Jalīl, and Mīrzā Zekī, persons he counted amongst his friends, and in whom he had perfect confidence in every respect. He conferred the post of Mūllā Bāshī on Mūllā Ramazān and the Sirdārship on Kūrbān Beg, with the title of Khān; the office of Wazīr he entrusted to Mīrzā Jalīl, and appointed Mīrzā Zekī to the rank of "Mustowfī," and abolished the post of Chief Astrologer altogether, as he considered that function detrimental rather than advantageous to the State and Religion.

The Shah directed that despatches should be sent to the Governors of all provinces, containing stringent orders to the effect that in future no Muslim was on any account to

<sup>1</sup> Kaliyān—The Persian water-pipe.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. four hours after sunset.



be subjected to punishment without being first tried in the religious courts, and that no person was to be mulcted from mere personal caprice. Sentences of death, the mutilation of ears and noses, and putting out eyes were to be discontinued. Furthermore, trustworthy emissaries<sup>1</sup> were selected to go and ascertain the condition of the various provinces and the needs of the people, and report thereon. Yūsuf Shāh summoned these emissaries to his presence and addressed them as follows: "Tell the Governors of the provinces from me to fear God, and pass no unjust sentences, to refrain from harassing the people or plundering their property, to accept no bribes, and to rest assured that actions of that sort will, in the long run, lead to misfortune and end in their ruin. They have over and over seen that those who have accumulated wealth by such conduct have eventually perished, or else have encountered utter misfortune, disgrace, and destitution. When possessions have been amassed by such methods in Irān, they have never remained permanently in any family. Where are now the crores upon crores of wealth of Ja'afar Khān Damghāni? Whither have the flocks, the retinues of Selīm Khān Karākulu betaken themselves? What has become of the possessions of Mīrzā Takī Shīrāzī? Whenever the monarchs of Irān have perceived that any person of high degree has amassed great wealth, it has been confiscated by the Government. They know it is the property of subjects and dependants, wrested from them by plunder or in bribes, so they forthwith call that person to account on some pretext, and, stripping him of all he possesses, either put him to death or cast him into misery and destitution. This phase of the Governors of our provinces closely resembles that of leeches which have become swollen from sucking blood; their owner gives them a squeeze, when they vomit all that blood; some die in this way, and some live on in a weak and languid state. If, on the other hand, the Governors be virtuous and content with their lawful

<sup>1</sup> Jāsus.—Spies.



fortunes, they will ever retain their rank, be exalted and revered in the sight of the people, and honoured by the king, so that they will increase in dignity day by day."

After making these instructions clear to them, he dismissed the emissaries. He then repeated his commands that the taxation and levy of duties should be reduced to a moderate amount, that the roads should everywhere be repaired, and the requisite bridges and caravanserais built for each stage, that hospitals should be established in every province, and schools opened, that water should be brought to places devoid of it, that it should be considered an incumbent duty to aid and succour widows and orphans, the blind and the paralytic; also, that in the various provinces it should not be permitted to every good-for-nothing, self-opinionated person to enter himself on the roll of the 'ulemā, but in each particular case the sanction of the Mūllā Bāshī must be obtained, and in no place was the class of the 'ulemā to be allowed to be in excess of what would suffice for the requirements of the population. He also granted fixed allowances from the public treasury for all the 'ulemā sufficient for their support, to the end that, being in receipt of Government grants, they should become well-affected to the State and cease to denounce the Government officials and royal servants as oppressors. He took the management of the affairs of the courts of justice, which constitute the mainstay of the State, out of the hands of the 'ulemā, and entrusted it to officials of integrity, so that the people should, as regards their law-suits, consider themselves independent of the 'ulemā, who were only to be so far referred to as not to be altogether excluded from the administration. Lists of the charities necessary in each district were to be submitted to four upright persons, and the poor of the province relieved in accordance with these lists, the accounts being submitted to the royal court, so that none should be excluded from charitable relief. He also ordered that the "fifths" and dues of the Imām should no longer be paid, in order that the descendants of the Prophet (blessings on him and

peace!) should be saved from the disgrace of begging, and earn their livelihood, like other people, by plying their trades. In this matter, some eminent men of learning showed Yūsuf Shah decisions which they extracted from books of the law. Notifications were also sent to the provinces to the effect that in future no one should presume to offer presents or spread reception carpets for the Shah, the ministers of State, or the attendants of the royal court. No one was to seek office by means of presents, but to consider good services, loyalty, and devotion as the passport to the realization of such ambitions. The Government revenues of every province were to be handed over to trustworthy persons, there to remain to the credit of the treasury, and the Government expenditure, being apportioned in accordance with the account books, should, at the proper time, be appropriated to that district, and the people entirely relieved from any further demands on account of expenditure. Further, he ordained, in view to increase of the State revenue, that the merchants, gentry, nobles, and princes, as also the literati and Seyyids, and all classes of the population, should contribute one-tenth of their incomes in the towns, and one-twentieth in the agricultural districts. The pay of the soldiery and other Government servants was not to be withheld, such a course being injurious to the State, but was invariably to be paid without any delay from the provincial treasuries. The sum of five shāhis<sup>1</sup> was to be paid to the treasury from the price of all property bought and sold. The existing laws and conditions of pecuniary transactions were to be abrogated, in order that monied people should not be tempted by the laws customary and in force to receive pledges and grant loans on them, in view to necessitous persons becoming desperate and destitute, and then selling up the property placed in pawn at low prices, in hopes of the persons requiring advances being unable to redeem their property.

<sup>1</sup> Shāhi—One-twentieth of a kerān.

As Yūsuf Shah knew—

(1) That the Master of the Horse was in the habit of going to the uplands<sup>1</sup> in the summer on pretence of pasturing the royal stud, and committed great oppression on the people of those districts, harrying them and seizing their property and flocks ;

(2) That the Commandant of the Artillery drew the whole of the pay of the artillerymen, and did not pay a *dinār*<sup>2</sup> to any of them ;

(3) That the Treasurer mixed false money with the Imperial coinage, and issued the same to the public ;

(4) That the Mayor<sup>3</sup> of Kazwīn was a receiver of bribes ;

(5) That the Superintendent of Police was in the habit of shelving cases preferred by the poor against the rich ;

(6) That the municipal officers neglected the streets of Kazwīn,

he dismissed all those officials, and appointed reputable and worthy persons in their stead. Akhwand Samad, the Mūllā Bāshī, having heard from the jailor in the prison of the citadel that his post had been given to his rival Mūllā Ramazān, died of vexation on the spot.

Yūsuf Shah also gave orders that the streets of Kazwīn should be widened, and that, for the safety of wayfarers, all open wells in the streets should be covered in. Arrangements were made for hearing and inquiring into petitions, and it was ordered that wheat should be supplied to the poor from the royal granaries. A committee was formed of men of experience and experts in water-works to confer and consult regarding a water supply for Kazwīn, and ordered to submit a written report of their proceedings and recommendations.

At that period, some of the people of Holland<sup>4</sup> had

<sup>1</sup> Yelāk—The cool summer mountain resorts of the nomad tribes. The winter quarters are termed kishlāk.

<sup>2</sup> Dinār—A nominal value equal to one-thousandth part of a kerān.

<sup>3</sup> Mayor—Beglerbegi, a Turki term primarily meaning chief of chiefs.

<sup>4</sup> The Dutch as well as English and French had established factories at this time at Gombroon, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. In the year 1622, when the English aided the Persians to drive the Portuguese from the adjacent



occupied a place in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf, and during these days an envoy from them with his suite arrived at Kazwīn, with a view to concluding a commercial treaty with the Government of Persia. The envoy and his suite were introduced to the presence of Yūsuf Shah, and were charmed and delighted by his wisdom, sagacity, statesmanship, and well-timed courtesies. After fully attaining the object of their mission, the envoy and suite were dismissed with presents, and returned entirely satisfied.

A week had elapsed from the accession of Yūsuf Shah, and every day the people had been shown good deeds fraught with justice, and the signs of every kind of well-being were apparent. These were the halcyon days of prosperity and gladness in Irān; an era of happiness and good fortune had dawned. But "cui bono?" For the human race the day of happiness is ever transient. What, haply, was lacking or amiss to our father Adam and our mother Eve in Eden that they should have disobeyed God's commands and been driven forth from Paradise? Such is man!

The inhabitants of Kazwīn, no longer seeing mutilated portions of men's bodies<sup>1</sup> hanging at the fort gate every day, nor beholding the wonted spectacle of the executioner putting men to death, gibbeting them, gouging out their eyes, and cutting off their ears and noses, thought matters had come to a strange pass indeed. At first they said: "Undoubtedly this new king is very clement and forbearing."<sup>2</sup> Afterwards they took to criticizing his mildness and humanity, and attributed this conduct to an indolent disposition and weakness of character. Furthermore, they discovered a thousand divers faults in Yūsuf Shah, the upshot of their talk being that life under the rule of a soft-hearted king like this seemed insufferably tedious.

island of Ormuz, the Shah ordered Gombroon to be named in future Bunder 'Abbās, the name it has since borne.

<sup>1</sup> Mushakkah-hā-i-Ādam—The term is not found in dictionaries, but is derived from the Ar. *shakk* "to split," "rive," "rip open," or "sunder." Shakkah means a side of butcher's meat.

<sup>2</sup> Būrd-bār.

The deposed officials guided the current of popular opinion into this channel, and, taking advantage of the favourable opportunity they saw, harboured designs of tumult and rebellion, and serious disturbances soon broke out in Kazwīn.

The originator of these disturbances, in the first instance, was the dismissed Master of the Horse, who, having met the late Treasurer in the street, joined him in his walk and said : " For God's sake, Mīrzā Habīb, tell me, for I want to know, what do the people say about our new king ? " Mīrzā Habīb replied : " The people do not like the new king ; they are having a bitter time of it ; they have come to the conclusion that he is imbecile and incompetent. "

*The Master of the Horse* : " By Allah ! Mīrzā Habīb, the people have more sense than ourselves, they say truly. In God's name ! what folly is this we have committed, to have brought forward a low saddler, and made him our king ? We have drawn trouble on our own heads. In return for our services he has deprived us of our posts. Now we are no more esteemed in the land than the street dogs. By Allah ! nothing could be more ignominious than what we have done. "

*The Treasurer* : " Nay, we made him king by Shah 'Abbās' command : what choice had we then ? "

*The Master of the Horse* : " True, but Shah 'Abbās was then king, and his orders were binding on us. But now that there is no Shah 'Abbās, what is there to prevent our casting this accursed freethinker (who they say, too, is a Pythagorean) down from the throne, and putting an end to him ? Afterwards we can place on the throne a prince of the Safawī family, who will, at all events, be fitted for throne and crown by reason of his noble origin. "

*The Treasurer* : " You say well. I shall co-operate with you in this respect, but we are only two individuals, and what can we effect ? Let us go to the Commandant of Artillery and ascertain his views ; he, too, like ourselves is one of those deposed from office. "

The two repair to the house of the Commandant of

Artillery, who, greatly pleased at their visit, listens most eagerly to their communication, and fully agrees with them regarding an insurrection, but says that this affair cannot be carried into execution without the concurrence of Bākir Khān, commander of the Chagīn cavalry.

*The Commandant of Artillery:* "Bākir Khān is my particular friend, and I pledge myself to secure his co-operation with us in this undertaking. I shall say to him: 'The mishap which has befallen us in the days of the reign of this unbelieving Yūsuf Shah will eventually fall on your head also. You had better provide against it beforehand.' I am certain this language will be effectual with him, for yesterday, at the public levée, the Shah was angry with, and rebuked him, so that he drank wine and went drunk to the mosque for prayers. If Bākir Khān agrees to join in this enterprise, Faraj Khān, commander of the infantry, will also consent, for he is the cousin and son-in-law of Bākir Khān, and never does anything in opposition to him. But do you two get up and go to the late mayor of Kazwīn, and, having obtained his concurrence, engage him to seek the deposed Dāroghah<sup>1</sup> and the Kedkhodā to talk the matter over with them, and gain them over also."

The conspirators separate, and each sets about the accomplishment of this purpose, and they very soon succeeded in their object, as in the course of three or four days all those selected were informed, and, all being disposed for insurrection and ready for the fray, it was settled that they should surround the royal palace on Saturday morning, and, entering the inner apartments, cast Yūsuf Shah down from the throne and put him to death; after which they would appoint a new king for themselves from the Safawī family.

On the morning of the appointed day, before the gate of the royal palace was opened, a large number of cavalry and infantry, in complete array, surrounded it on all sides. Yūsuf Shah, being informed of the state of affairs, gave

<sup>1</sup> Dāroghah—Town or Police Magistrate and Head of the City Police.

orders that the gates should not be opened. He had, indeed, expected such inequitable actions from the former Mūllā Bāshī, Sirdār Zemān Khān, the late Wazīr, and Mustowfī, the Munejjim Bāshī, and our master Jemāl-ed-dīn, who were powerful persons and openly hostile to him. It was for this reason that he had, at the outset of his reign, taken the precaution to throw them all into prison. But the door of ruin opened from another quarter.

In this juncture the well-wishers of Yūsuf Shah, being apprised, armed themselves and hurried, minute by minute, in large numbers towards the palace, and confronting the insurgents began to reason with them, and to exhort them to desist from these proceedings, but to no avail. The matter passing beyond the stage of negotiation and conciliation, hostilities and fighting commenced, and in the *mêlée* which ensued both sides were reckless of their lives. From bullets they passed to swords and daggers, and, falling on each other, blood flowed like water. After three hours and a half of fierce fighting nearly six thousand men of both sides were killed and wounded. At length the party of Yūsuf Shah showed symptoms of exhaustion and defeat; for the ungrateful populace kept issuing from the city and joining the ranks of the insurgents, adding to their numbers and strength. On this account the adherents of Yūsuf Shah suffered defeat, and each one withdrew himself as best he could from the fray to save his own life. The insurgents, making a rush, broke in the gate of the Shah's palace and entered it, but howsoever they searched for Yūsuf Shah they found him not. He had disappeared, and no trace of him was to be discovered. Some said that, during the fight, he had gone amongst his loyal adherents, encouraging them by his presence in the fray, and had been killed in the *mêlée*; others that he had concealed himself and escaped by flight. The essential point is that his body was not found amongst the slain. Howbeit no one thereafter pointed him out anywhere.

The insurgents plundered the royal palace, and thence, surging into the bazaar, looted the shops and caravanserais;



from thence they hurried to the quarter of the Jews and Armenians, and ransacked and plundered all their houses, committing all sorts of outrages and excesses. The sun set. The tumult and pillage ceased, and everyone returned to his abode.

The next morning the leaders of the insurrection set out for the citadel, and having released from the prison Sirdār Zemān Khān, Mīrzā Mohsin the Wazīr, Mīrzā Yahyā the Mustowfī, our master Jemāl-ed-dīn, and the Munejjim Bāshī, related to them what had happened, and inquired: "Now which prince of the Safawī family do you consider most eligible for the throne and crown?" Our master Jemāl-ed-dīn said: "In God's name, tell me what day of the month is this?" The Master of the Horse replied: "To-day is the sixteenth day after the festival of Nowrōz." Our master, manifesting his delight, said: "Be no longer grieved; the tumult has occurred to the very day; it is clear the catastrophe is over. No one of the Safawī princes is fitted for the monarchy; they are all beardless and blind, some having been rendered so by Shah Ismā'īl the second, some by Shah 'Abbās himself; they are no longer eligible, and would not serve our purpose. Shah 'Abbās is still our king."

*The Master of the Horse* replied: "We are well pleased with his kingly rule, and it went very happily with all of us during his time, but what good is that? Since he has abdicated the throne and crown, and disappeared from our sight, what can we do? Moreover, we know not where he is."

Our master laughed and said: "There was a reason for his abdication; lo! that reason no longer exists. We ourselves know his place of concealment. We shall go fetch him, and escort him to his own palace."

All arose and proceeded to the house in which Shah 'Abbās lay concealed, and bringing him forth conveyed him to the royal palace. He resumed his former position as Lord of the throne and crown, and matters settled down into the old course, as if nothing had happened.



*Author's Epilogue.*

I am amazed at the stupidity of these heavenly bodies, so deceived as they were by the people of Irān, that they knew not that Yūsuf Sarrāj was not really Shah, but only a mock king set up to dupe them. Such simplicity and credulity as allowed the stars to be hoodwinked by the Persians was very wonderful. Strange, too, that they should cling to Shah 'Abbās, consign to his doom poor innocent Yūsuf, the saddler, and thereafter for forty years behold with indifference the cruelty and tyranny of the former. Amongst the least conspicuous examples of the ruthlessness of Shah 'Abbās were his putting to death one of his own sons, and putting out the eyes of two others. Nor had he any other son, so a grandson became heir to his throne. However, there is no reason to blame the stars, which had no enmity towards Shah 'Abbās. It had become incumbent on them that fifteen days after the Nowrōz they should depose an individual from the throne of Persia, and cause his ruin. Yūsuf Sarrāj was at that time seated on the throne of Persia; accordingly the stars brought to pass his fall and doom. It never occurred to the stars that the people of Irān would trick them by such a stratagem, and that a mock king instead of the real one would succumb to their blow.

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